



State of Wisconsin
Department of Public Instruction
Elizabeth Burmaster, State Superintendent

*****NEWS RELEASE*****

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Advanced Placement participation continues to grow

Wisconsin retains best in the Midwest title for Advanced Placement participation

MADISON—Wisconsin is among 18 states that equaled or exceeded the national percentage of students who earned a passing score on an Advanced Placement exam while in high school. The state also had the highest participation and achievement for the 13-state Midwest region.

Wisconsin had 15,677 of its 2008 graduates take an Advanced Placement exam while in high school. Of those students, 16.6 percent achieved a score of 3 or higher. Nationally, 757,932 graduates took an Advanced Placement exam, and 15.2 percent earned passing scores. Wisconsin has the highest participation rate in the Midwest region with 24.2 percent of students taking one or more Advanced Placement exams while in high school. Only three states in the Midwest region—Illinois, Michigan, and Minnesota—had participation rates that exceeded 20 percent.

AP Report to the Nation

Public School Students

Wisconsin	2008
Graduates Taking an AP Exam	15,677
Percent Earning Scores of 3-5	16.6
Nation	
Graduates Taking an AP Exam	757,932
Percent Earning Scores of 3-5	15.2

“Wisconsin had a 39-percent increase in students taking an Advanced Placement exam while in high school between 2003 and 2008,” said State Superintendent Elizabeth Burmaster. “The message that high school rigor is important for the next steps in academic study is making a difference.”

Advanced Placement is an academic program with courses in 37 subjects that culminate with college-level assessments. Exams are graded on a scale of one to five, with a score of three or higher considered “passing” and eligible for credit at most colleges and universities. According to the College Board, a score of three or higher on an Advanced Placement exam is a good predictor of a student’s ability to succeed in college and earn a bachelor’s degree.

Wisconsin saw slight increases from five years ago in the percentage of economically disadvantaged students and students of color who took Advanced Placement exams during high school.

(more)

Students of color represented 6.9 percent of examinees in 2003 and 9.6 percent in 2008. For the graduating class of 2003, 3.2 percent of those taking Advanced Placement exams received a fee waiver because they were from low-income families. In the 2008 graduating class, 6.2 percent of students received fee waivers.

“Wisconsin is striving to improve access to Advanced Placement,” Burmaster noted. “Our goal is to provide students with the skills and academic training that allows them to engage in demanding coursework and prepares them for postsecondary studies.”

The Department of Public Instruction’s proposal to increase participation of low-income students in Advanced Placement courses and exams received a \$2.1 million grant in October 2008 through the U.S. Department of Education’s Advanced Placement Incentive Program. The three-year grant proposal, “Blended Learning Innovations: A Pipeline for Equity and Access,” will impact more than 26,000 middle and high school students in 18 districts throughout the state. Additionally, the 2007-09 state budget provided \$100,000 annually to support Advanced Placement programming.

U.S. history, English literature, and psychology remained the most popular Advanced Placement courses among 2008 graduates. In subject area groupings, 10.6 percent of Wisconsin graduates scored three or higher on a social science exam compared to 8.4 percent nationally; 6.4 percent earned a three or higher on a mathematics exam compared to 5.6 percent in the nation. In science, 4.6 percent of state public school graduates scored a three or higher compared with 4.4 percent nationally.

“Our graduates surpassed the national average for achievement on Advanced Placement mathematics and science exams,” Burmaster said. “This news is particularly heartening, because those who succeed in these STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) will be the innovators and entrepreneurs who will spearhead creativity and economic development for our state and nation.”

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NOTES: Tables that follow provide additional background on the Advanced Placement Report to the Nation. This news release is available electronically at http://dpi.wi.gov/eis/pdf/dpi2009_14.pdf.

Fifth Annual AP Report to the Nation

AP Participation Public School Students

	Class of		
	2003	2007	2008
Wisconsin			
Graduates Taking an AP Exam	11,258	14,501	15,677
Percent Taking an AP Exam	17.8	22.5	24.2
Percent Earning Scores of 3-5	12.2	15.6	16.6
Nation			
Graduates Taking an AP Exam	516,260	696,741	757,932
Percent Taking an AP Exam	19.0	23.6	25.0
Percent Earning Scores of 3-5	12.2	14.4	15.2

Midwest Region Public Schools Percent of 2007-08 Graduates

State	Taking an AP Exam in High School	Earning 3 or Higher
Illinois	22.8	15.2
Indiana	19.8	10.0
Iowa	12.6	8.3
Kansas	13.7	8.6
Michigan	20.2	13.0
Minnesota	22.5	14.2
Missouri	10.8	6.5
Nebraska	10.7	6.5
North Dakota	10.4	6.9
Ohio	17.6	10.8
South Dakota	16.0	9.7
West Virginia	15.3	6.9
Wisconsin	24.2	16.6

AP Participation by Low-Income Students* Public School Students

Year	Graduates Taking an AP Exam	Low-income Graduates Taking an AP Exam	Percent of AP Examinee Population
2003	11,258	363	3.2
2007	14,501	803	5.5
2008	15,677	973	6.2

*Low-income students are identified by financially motivated exam fee waivers

AP Participation by Racial or Ethnic Group

	2003		2007		2008	
	Graduates Taking an AP Exam	Percent of AP Examinees	Graduates Taking an AP Exam	Percent of AP Examinees	Graduates Taking an AP Exam	Percent of AP Examinees
Wisconsin						
African American	186	1.7	323	2.2	396	2.4
American Indian	40	0.4	81	0.6	61	0.4
Asian	327	2.9	499	3.4	610	3.9
Hispanic or Latino	219	1.9	428	3.0	439	2.8
White	10,197	90.6	12,706	87.6	13,748	87.7

10 Most Popular AP Exams: Wisconsin Class of 2008

Public School Students

Subject	Number of Exams	Scoring 3 or Higher	
		Number	Percent
U.S. History	4,971	2,930	58.9
English Literature	4,796	3,286	68.5
Psychology	4,657	3,596	77.2
Calculus AB	3,837	2,708	70.6
Biology	2,697	1,540	57.1
English Language	2,627	1,877	71.5
Chemistry	1,712	1,061	62.0
Government and Politics: U.S.	1,669	981	58.8
Statistics	1,579	1,084	68.7
European History	1,321	981	74.3